837 588 548 [586] Free Marriage. The only marriage which can be called free, since it is accepted by both parties, is that of a woman who is unable to endure her first husband and leaves her village with the intention of becoming a prostitute. Divorce is quite rare because the Moaga does not readily agree to it. As she passes through a village, she asks for hospitality, and the news soon spreads that a "free" woman is staying at such-and-such a place. The young men hasten to her and seek to win her favors. Gifts are sent to her, and her hostess is used as go-between. Nine times out of ten, the woman accepts the candidate preferred by her hostess. After some questions concerning his origins and circumstances, one of the young men is accepted as a temporary lover. His comrades come to his aid, and for a few days there is a veritable festival in the village. There is a slight change in the [177] regular fare, since meat is added to the mush; chickens, raised with considerable difficulty, are used for this special treat. This semblance of marriage is thus celebrated. As has been pointed out, however, there has been no divorce, and the deserted husband soon learns the whereabouts of his wife. As soon as he finds out what village she is in -- it may be 100 kilometers away -- he promptly sets out, carrying in a sheepskin enough ground millet for the journey and 500 to 1,000 cowries. He also carries a rooster which, along with the shells, will be offered to the chief of the canton where the lover lives, to whom he will make his claim.

[578] Unions of this sort give rise to three-quarters of the quarrels with which the canton or province chiefs have to deal. A young Moaga who desires peace of mind never regularizes the situation by a so-called marriage even though he may not be able to resist the temptation to harbor the woman for a few days. In any event the affair is easily broken off since sooner or later the woman, eager for change, will want a new lover.

583 Thus, it may be said that although forced marriage has the disadvantage of having a girl marry without her consent, still it also has advantages and a degree of security because the woman, fearing [178] her parents' wrath, rarely leaves her husband. Furthermore, this type of marriage is vastly preferable from the standpoint of peace

584
583 have borrowed. In addition, he would expose himself and the preferred suitor to the vengeance of the rejected one.

583 The bride price is not exorbitant. The total gifts, spread over a period of years, amount to some fifty francs, without counting the work days. Nevertheless, it requires sufficient means to secure at least the necessary cowries. Besides, the child's father prefers to give her to someone who already boasts a certain fame and some wealth, in short, to an elderly man. /30/ This is why children are promised to old dotards, and white-haired men are paired with young girls; while the old men's sons of marriageable age cannot get wives. If the father has the means to pay the bride price, he carefully refrains from helping his son, even if the latter has found a match to his liking.

587 It is true that all the father's wives are inherited by the oldest son,
578 who gives some to his younger brothers; but this occurs only at the old man's death, and this may not happen for a long time. This ex-
593 plains why the oldest son wishes for his father's death, and why the father sends the son away for fear of a premature end. It is only fair to add that some men, with a better understanding of their own interests, marry off their sons as soon as they are old enough.

595 Polygamy exists among the Mossi as in all Black countries. The
[556] wealth of a man is gauged by the number of his wives. Women furnish hands to till the soil, for the wife works in the fields like the husband. Women also furnish children, and if these are daughters, young men will come to offer their services (dakonré) and one day take the girls in marriage; or the father will receive gifts. If the children are boys, they will later aid the father in his work. In these countries where each lives for himself alone, where selfishness reigns supreme, polygamy is easily explained, but it undoubtedly results in a lower birth rate. White-bearded old men cannot have children as numerous and sound as young men in their prime, and the latter, deprived of wives, wear themselves out with their excesses. It is true that those who can afford a dozen wives are few; most have to be content with two, three, or four. Some nabas, nevertheless, own veritable herds of women, and this is certainly a grievous abuse. Their wives are numbered in the hundreds. The greatest moral dis-
[837] order reigns in those harems, where the boys who serve as grooms and pages spend most of their time among their master's wives. This explains the precautions taken by the women's owners and the eunuchs of the Moro Naba, as well as the Poënaba and his sinister duties.

593 reprimand them, while the mother's role, here as elsewhere, is to indulge her children.

595 The children of different wives are quite fond of one another and often exchange help. When the father dies, the eldest son make no distinction among his brothers and helps them all as best he can. Polygamy seems to present no drawbacks in this respect.

When a man has several wives, his first wife (porkyema) is mistress of the household rather than his mother. All the other wives are on an equal footing, even the slaves, excepting, of course, those for whom the husband has a special preference. As the number of wives increases, so does the authority of the first wife, who wants /39/ her husband to have as many wives as possible. Each wife has a separate hut where she lives with her children, and this avoids many a quarrel. The husband goes to the hut of the woman he desires, or he has her come to his own hut. When a man works in his field, all his wives and children must help him, because he feeds them all and gives them a daily millet ration; it is, accordingly, only fair that all should take part in agricultural work within the limits of their capacity.

593 443 421 Provided that a woman remain at her husband's disposal and help him in the fields, she is free to do as she pleases. She goes to market to sell the grain, the spices for sauce, and the thread to weave cloth, but the husband sells the fabric strips and the raw cotton. During the winter each woman may have her own field to cultivate with her children, and the harvest belongs wholly to her. The husband has no say in the matter. If the woman spins cotton, she sells it at the market or even to her husband; if she brews beer, she offers one jar to her husband, but if he entertains friends and wants additional jars, he must pay cash for them. It is not unusual for a woman to refuse her husband credit, for who knows when he would pay?

593 574 A woman may visit her relatives with the permission of her husband, who sets a return date. The woman rarely comes back on the date set, and the husband goes to fetch her himself, or he sends one of his friends with a piece of salt or a small gift. A woman especially likes to visit her relatives when she is pregnant or shortly after the baby's birth. She knows that she will be well cared for and especially that she will enjoy complete freedom. As a result, it is not unusual for a woman to leave her husband for several months and to return only after considerable coaxing. Most quarrels between one Mossi and another derive from their wives and from their debts; yet it may not be said, as a general rule, that women are unhappy or ill treated.

[578]

791 Anyone may become a sorcerer, and those who take up the call
756 are usually poor chaps who have nothing to live on, who do not have the strength to till the soil, or who simply want to live without working. When someone enters the brotherhood of bara, people say that he wants to learn how to be idle, and they laugh about it.

791 During the dry season the country is overrun with hordes of Gourounsi and Nankana, filthy and ragged, who claim to know everything and to possess a charm for every purpose, even to make peanuts grow. Led by a chief who speaks a few words of Mossi, they wander from one village to another, dancing and singing for the nabas like the mountebanks who perform at the wagon door of fortune tellers to attract the public... They are consulted, and they return home well rigged out thanks to the cowries they have gathered in Mossi country.

754 /105/ The seuya or soul-eaters are greatly feared. The death of
774 a native, especially that of a child, is often ascribed to them. They have the power of leaving the human body they inhabit and wandering about everywhere in search of a soul to eat. Fire is their vehicle, and they travel about at night on the will-o'-the-wisps that wander in the fields around the huts. They may be stopped by the trees and thrown to the ground, and those who possess an amulet more powerful than their can drive them away.

The seuya are extremely dangerous, for complete protection against them is impossible. They work by night. Every mortal soul leaves the body often during the night and goes wandering about. Woe to it if it should come upon a seuya. He will pounce upon the soul or put it under a big stone, and the unfortunate body that owns it will fall ill and eventually die. The only remedy is to offer a sacrifice to the tangandé, and the guardian animal of the village will go on a search until it locates and releases the unhappy soul; the tangandé causes it to re-enter the body, and the sick person gets well. If, however, the seuya ate the soul, or if he is in connivance with the tangandé, nothing can be done, and death swiftly ensues.

791 The bagré sorcerers can tell who is a seuya and who is not. Some
754 of them have a tim which permits them to distinguish the seuya in a crowd of people. They need only smoke a pipe, and the eyes of the soul-eating man will redden and fill with tears. Those accused of
754 being seuya usually deny the charge, and to call someone a seuya is
● [578] one of the worst insults. We have already described the heinous death inflicted on these unfortunate people. Old women especially are

4: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1957
FA28 Mossi FA28

635 The Ouidi-naba answered: "Naba, you may do as you desire." The ruler
631 then said, "Under these conditions I will designate the eldest son of the late chief as the new Kombéré because his father has never forgotten me, or gave me any trouble when he was alive. It will not be good to reject his son." The ministers then called the heir and put the following question to him three times: "Before his death, did your father designate anyone to replace him as chief?" The heir replied three times: "No! My father did not designate anyone. You may name anyone you wish; even if he is
[778] a blind man or a leper." The heir was then given a bonnet, the symbol of the *nam*, and made to swear on drinking the Tibo, a ritual potion, that if he ever betrayed the ruler, may the Tibo kill him. Thereafter, all the members of the new chief's lineage swore to respect and obey him.

635 The power and function of the Kombéré were similar to those of the
631 Moro-naba, but on a much reduced scale. As the person who had received the *nam* from the Moro-naba, he was supreme in his district, subject only
578 to his obligation to the head ruler. These obligations included the customary gifts and aid in warfare. There is some evidence that many of the Kombérés were lax in paying this tribute and rendering homage to the Moro-naba and consequently were punished or killed. Naba Warga fought a five-year-long civil war against a rebellious vassal before the rebel was killed, and Naba Wobogo was engaged in a three-year civil war with one of his vassals when the French arrived in the country. It is not clear whether the Moro-naba was able to prevent or stop war between his vassals over strayed cattle or stolen women. The Mossi in the district of Nobéré said that the Moro-naba did not often know when neighboring villages were at war. These wars did not involve the loss of territories by the districts, since it was ritually forbidden for one district chief to take lands from another.

631 The district chiefs had ministers who helped them administer the districts. These ministers were descendants of the sons of the Moro-naba's ministers who accompanied the first district chief when he took up his fief. They had control of several villages and they channeled goods and services from the villages to the district heads. The hierarchy of command was also strictly observed on this level, and a village chief who had disputes with other village chiefs, or who had important cases to be judged, was required always to be accompanied by his minister when he visited the district chief. This official could put any man into stocks for
[681 serious crimes, but he could authorize the death only of commoners. It
565] must be pointed out, however, that in many cases the district chief usurped the rights of the Moro-naba, and had a troublesome noble secretly strangled. The district chief, like the Moro-naba, could not be deposed; he was often forced to commit suicide or met death by foul play or in open civil war. The people in the district reacted to an unjust ruler by leaving his territories.

The village chiefs held their fiefs directly from the district chiefs, and

428 As for the soukala itself, he keeps it. He leaves his own
593 soukala, along with everything he owns, to come and live in the soukala of the deceased. In order to put the soukala he is leaving to some use, however, he sends one of his unmarried brothers (that is to say, one who lived up to that time with the deceased) to settle there. He immediately gives this brother one of his father's wives, one of the wives in the estate, and sends him, thus married, to settle in the soukala he is leaving.

593 I asked my informant why the father does not keep his oldest
578 married son with him instead of having him build a new soukala on the outside, since the son returns to the paternal soukala anyway when the father dies. The Mossi chief I was questioning replied that if the father kept his oldest son by his side, the latter, when married and growing older, would wish for his father's death in order to become independent. Wishing for his father's death, he might be tempted to bring it about. If settled in his own soukala, on the other hand, the head of a household and independent, he would nurture no ill thoughts against his father.

593 We shall see later that this feeling of fear and suspicion toward
578 the eldest son is carried to an extreme among the Moro Nabas. This
644 is understandable, since kingship is inherited. Once married, therefore, the eldest son of the prince went far from his father, to a soukala of his own and remained there until the Moro Naba's death.

428 As for the father's fields, the eldest son keeps them all if he is
593 able to work them all. If he is not able to do so, he gives the surplus over and above what he can work to his brothers.

As far as livestock is concerned, the eldest son gives some to his younger brothers and even to his sisters.

The same applies to slaves and cowries.

428 As for wives, if there are many, he gives some to his younger
593 brothers. Thus, for example, if there are ten wives and he has two
581 brothers, he gives two wives to each /551/ brother and keeps six for himself (let us add that the deceased, before dying, often gives a wife to his younger brother or brothers).

428 To summarize, the eldest son gets the soukala and the fields.
593 As for movable property, he takes about 50 percent and leaves the other half to the younger sons and to the daughters. There is a sharing, therefore, although a very uneven one.

586 8. Incest. In case incest is committed by one of the spouses, the other has the right to request a divorce. The gifts remain in the husband's possession if the wife is guilty, or revert to her if it was the husband who commited incest."

Such are the major theoretical cases which may result in divorce. Let us first return to one of them: nonfulfillment of the conjugal duty on the husband's part. The results noted by Vadier seem contradictory to those which we mentioned above (under "conjugal duty"). Actually, no contradiction is involved. When a husband does not fulfill his conjugal duty toward his wife (this, incidentally, occurs quite rarely), either the woman has only praise for her husband in all /248/ other respects, or he is cruel and mean and she is dissatisfied with him on [837] other counts. In the first instance, she takes a lover outside her husband's compound, a liaison to which he voluntarily shuts his eyes, and she does not request a divorce. In the second case, she does request one. That is how the situation is actually resolved.

586 837 Among the instances of divorce enumerated by Vadier, the most frequent, or rather the least rare, are as follows. (1) Continual infidelity on the part of the wife. I say "continual," for as we have already noted, while in principle a single infidelity on the woman's part enables the husband to ask for a divorce, in actual fact a wife is never sent back for a single breach of the marriage contract. Instead, she is merely beaten. If the woman persists in betraying her husband, however, he eventually sends her away. (2) Insults passed 586 between each other by the husband and wife in a moment of anger do 578 not count, but insults by the husband about his wife's relatives or by a 602 wife about the husband's relatives are serious. (Incidentally, this [171] sensitivity on the subject of relatives is not peculiar to the Mossi. It is common to all the Sudanese Negroes I have seen, Bambara, Malinké, etc.) Thus, if the husband insults his wife's relatives, she may request a divorce. Actually, a woman who loves her husband does not tell her relatives about insults which he may have aimed at them in a moment of anger. She says nothing and does not ask for a divorce. If she holds other grudges against her husband, however, or secretly wishes for a separation, she will eagerly take advantage of this motive which is considered to be serious. As regards the wife's insults against her husband's relatives (like the preceding, an unusual case among the Mossi), the same thing applies. Either the husband loves his wife and says nothing, or he does not love her and takes this opportunity to get rid of her.

10:Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1964 FA28 Mossi FA28
Yatenga

571
604 indirectly from the good will of his ancestral spirits whose benevolence Ego often invokes.

Ambivalence follows from other characteristics of the relationship. Resentment of Ego's depredations of her husband's property and jealous concern for the inheritance rights of her own children appear to be at least partially balanced by a share of the affection her husband shows for Ego. However, joking in this relationship is asymmetrical. The mother's brother's wife takes the more aggressive role, and from the vehemence of her joking, and the [159] structural nature of the relationship, it appears likely that amity lies less heavily in the balance than hostility. The groups to which the two parties belong are equal in status. Their respective positions within them, of course, are not, and this is reflected in the aforementioned asymmetry. Each party is obviously independent of the authority system of the other.

571
607 *Joking Between Siblings-in-Law*

[144] Siblings-in-law who joke are separated by the rule of sib exogamy observed among the Mossi. Reciprocity is basic to the marriage contract that unites their respective kin groups. Several factors tend to create ambivalence in the relationship. Both kin groups—in particular, the extended families of the two marriage partners—profit from the reciprocal tie established between them, but possible failure on the part of either group to reciprocate adequately, [87] particularly with regard to marriage payments, constitutes a persistent source [58] of potential friction. Moreover, the Mossi observe the levirate. Joking between siblings-in-law who are potential spouses, yet are presently constrained by a [137] prohibition against adultery, has frequently been ascribed the function of reducing tension in a situation of conflict. The kin groups of siblings-in-law [64] [58] are always structurally equivalent because groups occupying significantly different strata in Mossi society do not intermarry. As members of autonomous descent groups the participants are obviously independent of one another.

571
614 *Joking Between Sibs*

Sibs (or lineages) whose members joke with one another are, of course, also separate groups.[2] They are always united by a strong tradition of reciprocal social and economic aid. Ambivalence apparently stems from the conflict between this tradition of reciprocity and actual competing claims to land. The origin of joking relationships between two descent groups is often ascribed to the alleged fact that, when they first arrived in the village, leaders [123] of both falsely claimed to the chief that he and his kinsmen had arrived first, and thus had a prior right to land, and that the members of the other group were their slaves. Despite their jocular allegations, both groups are in fact structurally equal and independent.

571
561 *Joking Between Age-Sets*

Joking between age-sets within an age-grade varies with the generational

10:Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1964 FA28 Mossi FA28

4. The importance of sibling-in-law joking as a means of regulating conflict in the Mossi marriage relationship is further substantiated by the results of comparative research conducted among the Mossi resettled at the Office du Niger in the neighboring Republic of Mali.

The Mossi, who were first forcibly and later voluntarily resettled in Mali, were allocated farm land as elementary family units without regard for their extended kinship affiliations. Thus a man often found himself living in unaccustomed "isolation," in the company only of his wife or wives and children, and otherwise surrounded by total strangers. Although the potential for conflict in the marriage relationship remained high, or was even augmented by the stresses of adjusting to a changed milieu, sibling-in-law joking, the institution through which such tension is traditionally regulated among the Mossi, was no longer operative. Unless the younger siblings of each spouse had accompanied them to the resettlement area, those individuals were absent to whom they might have communicated their grievances and expressed their aggressive sentiments in a socially harmless, psychologically satisfactory, and culturally acceptable way.

As the traditionally sanctioned means of dealing with tension resulting from marital conflict was no longer available to the Mossi resettled in Mali, there occurred an increase in the incidence both of violence in marital disputes and of separation and divorce.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brant, C. S. 1948. On Joking Relationships. American Anthropologist 50: 161.

Christensen, J. B. 1963. Utani: Joking, Sexual License and Social Obligations Among the Luguru. American Anthropologist 65: 1314-1327.

Colson, E. 1953. Clans and the Joking Relationship Among the Plateau Tonga of Northern Rhodesia. Kroeber Anthropological Society Papers 9-10: 45-60.

Cunnison, I. 1959. The Luapula Peoples of Northern Rhodesia. Manchester.

Eggan, F. ed. 1937. Social Anthropology of the North American Tribes. Chicago.

Fortes, M. 1949. The Web of Kinship Among the Tallensi. London.

Goody, J. 1956. The Social Organization of the Lo Wiili. London.

Griaule, M. 1948. L'alliance cathartique. Africa 28: 242-258.

Hammond, P. B. 1959. The Functions of Indirection in Communication. Comparative Studies in Administration, ed. J. D. Thompson *et al.* pp. 183-194. Pittsburgh.

———— 1963. The Niger Project: Some Cultural Sources of Conflict. Emerging Africa, ed. W. H. Lewis, pp. 12-28. Washington.

Labouret, H. 1929. La parenté à plaisanteries en Afrique Occidentale. Africa 2: 244-254.

Murdock, G. P. 1949. Social Structure. New York.

Paulme, D. 1939. Parenté à plaisanteries et alliance par le sang en Afrique Occidentale. Africa 12: 433-444.

Pedler, F. 1940. Joking Relationships in East Africa. Africa 13: 170-173.

Radcliffe-Brown, A. 1940. On Joking Relationships. Africa 13: 195-210.

———— 1949. A Further Note on Joking Relationships. Africa 14: 133-140.

Richards, A. 1937. Reciprocal Clan Relationships Among the Bemba of Northeastern Rhodesia. Man 37: 188-193.

Tait, D. 1961. The Konkomba of Northern Ghana. London.

Turner, V. 1957. Schism and Continuity in an African Society. Manchester.

Watson, W. 1958. Tribal Cohesion in a Money Economy. Manchester.

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

[P. 13]

II

SOVEREIGNTY, KINSHIP, AND COMMUNITY

The Mossi restricted all important positions within the traditional political organization to persons who claimed lineal descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri, the ancient founders of the Mossi nation. Thus all the *Mogho Naamse*, *Dimdamba*, *Kombemba*, and *Tense Nanamse*—the heads of kingdoms, principalities, districts, and villages, respectively—claimed descent in the royal line. The bond of kinship among all important Mossi rulers was symbolized by membership in the lion clan (*Gegema*) and affiliated clans or *boodoo* founded by ancient members of the ruling families. Although the Mossi respected clan totems, they did not stress clan organization. They were more interested in membership in the segmentary lineages within the clans.[1] Yet not all Mossi groups stressed lineage affiliation. This was of supreme importance only for nobles whose membership in particular segments of ruling lineages gave them access to the *nam*—the power first possessed by the ancient founders, which is described by the Mossi as "that force of God which enables one man to control another." So important was the corporate possession of the nam by a ruling lineage that with few exceptions, membership in such a lineage gave a Moaga noble status.[2] Lineage segmentation gave some segments easier access to the nam, however, and resulting conflicts over sovereignty gave rise to the various Mossi kingdoms, principalities, and even districts.

Every Mossi ruling line attempted to legitimize its position by claiming the most direct descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri. The descendants of the founder of a local ruling lineage would claim that he had been an elder son deprived of his patrimony by unscrupulous younger brothers, or an elder son disqualified by a physical handicap from receiving the nam. Some ruling lineages even claimed that their founders had been elder sons who had voluntarily forsaken the problems of government and established new districts for themselves. Whenever tradition recounted that a younger son had indeed founded a kingdom or district, it was invariably said that he

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

the same royal ancestors. A Mossi village chief was likewise the head of his babissi and ex officio head of all the other babissi in his village that belonged to his boodoo. As the official Boodkasma of his village's ruling lineage, the village chief held junior or senior status in relation to other village chiefs of the same boodoo who were also the Boodkasemdamba of their respective lineage segments.

Possession of the nam influenced the pattern of seniority within lineages and lineage segments. In most cases, seniority was based on age and generation. Thus, the oldest man of the oldest generation was the Boodkasma, and his office devolved upon the next oldest man when he died. But within the ruling lineages and their segments, the man who held the nam, whether young or old, was automatically senior to all others. This does not mean that these ruling lineages did not recognize age and generational seniority. For example, whenever a chief died and sovereignty returned to the lineage as a corporate group, the senior noble of the senior generation became the acting Boodkasma and lineage head. Like all Boodkasemdamba, he managed the affairs of his group, but only until a new chief was elected. The new Boodkasma, however, sometimes delegated some of his social rights and ritual obligations to this elder, who was often regarded as the unofficial or semi-official Boodkasma of his lineage. Similarly, the senior nobles of all segments of the ruling lineage were also regarded as Boodkasemdamba. Because they were so regarded and because of the role they played, these men seldom came into conflict with the district chief. He gave them a certain amount of leeway in dealing with the everyday affairs of their group. It was understood by all, however, that nothing should jeopardize the most important asset of the lineage—the nam. Therefore, the chief was obeyed in all important matters involving the noble lineage of the district. In such matters he listened to no one; for, as one district chief said, "Once I have received the nam from the Mogho Naba, no man in this district stands above me!"

This dominance of political relations over social relations was made clear by the behavior of commoners toward ruling nobles on the one hand, and of nobles among themselves on the other. Commoners showed greater respect and deference toward members of the ruling babissi than toward persons belonging to other noble babissi. Thus, they were more respectful to the district chief's father's brothers, his siblings, and his children than to his more distant relatives. Within the noble lineage itself, everyone had to respect the chief as the holder of the nam, but otherwise the generational principle of respect and deference was maintained. The eldest nobleman of the eldest generation received deference from all others (excluding the

554 613 571 778

chief), and the hierarchy of respect descended to the youngest nobleman of the youngest generation. Very often, the full-grown son and presumed heir of the district chief had to kneel in respect to a distantly related younger man of an elder generation. Of course, this deference ceased if and when he became chief. If he did not receive the nam, he continued to show deference to all his lineage elders. This distinction between nam and boodoo was [578] a source of potential conflict within the ruling lineages. The people usually accepted the implications of both principles, but when they did not, there were dynastic quarrels and territorial secessions.

622 613 554 778 571 The age and generational principles also operated within non-noble ruling lineages, but here too they were often complicated by the possession of the nam. Those village chiefs who had lost their noble status but retained the nam acted as official Boodkasemdamba of their local lineage segments and had considerable influence over their lineage although they did not control all its segments. Each lineage segment had its own Boodkasma, who normally ran its affairs. But because of the importance of the nam in Mossi life, the Boodkasemdamba deferred to the village chief in [565] important matters pertaining to their own boodoo. However, the generational principle was followed within the local boodoo. Almost no one deferred to the children of the village chief, who, after all, were not nakomce.

613 571 778 The situation within commoner lineages that did not hold the nam was quite different. The age and generational principles obtained within the lineage segments of these boodoo, but never *across* the segments, as they did across the babissi. These segments were more autonomous. Each had its own Boodkasma, who looked after it without deferring to anyone. This autonomy was all the more pronounced since the segments of non-noble lineages tended to be scattered throughout a district. They interacted socially and politically only when they were physically close. In any case, in the absence of the nam, the segments of non-noble lineages had no reason to remain together; they tended to lose their hierarchical quality and to become equal and separate.

613 173 778 As would be expected in such circumstances, not all Mossi lineages paid the same attention to their genealogies. Noble lineages kept track of their actual or putative ancestors, whereas non-noble lineages tended to ignore them and to let geographical proximity determine meaningful kinship ties. This loss of interest in exact genealogies was found even among lineages that had lost the nam of a district and with it their nobility, but still retained the nam of a village. Members of the minimal units in such lineages competed actively for the village nam and were interested in fairly recent an-

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

fied his sexual desires. Since these women were in the monarch's favor, they were better dressed than the other wives and received more attention from him. The dogunba generally cultivated a large field in common with the aid of the palace retainers, but some insisted on cultivating their own fields instead. Like the other wives, the dogunba usually lived in huts of their own. Childless women sometimes shared the same hut until one of them became pregnant and had to set up a hut for herself and her child.

Those wives who lived in special villages under the supervision of eunuchs rarely went to the palace. Usually, they were past childbearing age or had lost favor with the monarch. They cultivated plots of land, spun cotton, and prepared locust-bean flour, locust-bean "balls," and shea butter. They kept a part of the produce for their own use and sent the remainder to the palace stores; the same arrangement obtained for all three categories of palace wives.

The Mogho Naba's heir was usually born while his father was still Crown Prince. He was never born in his father's compound because, unlike other Mossi women, the wife of a Mogho Naba or Crown Prince returned to her father's house for confinement. As soon as she announced her pregnancy, the Pughtiema or one of the older wives held a ceremony to notify the ancestors. Once the rite had been completed, the wife was sent to her relatives for fear that she might be harmed by her less fortunate co-wives. If the child was a boy, the ruler or Crown Prince was notified immediately, because the important privileges of a first-born hinged upon this notification. Since several wives of the Mogho Naba might be pregnant at the same time and errors might be made about the onset and duration of pregnancy, primogeniture had to be established immediately to forestall dynastic conflicts. For example, it is commonly believed that the present Doulougou Naba was born several days before Mogho Naba Sagha II (1942–57) but was deprived of the nam because the messenger who brought news of his birth reached Mogho Naba Kom after the messenger who announced Sagha's birth. Undoubtedly, such allegations were sometimes used to foster and support dynastic rebellions.

So strong was the fear that the most likely heir to the nam would be harmed by jealous co-wives that the child and his mother never returned to the palace except for brief visits on ceremonial occasions. The young prince remained with his mother's relatives and was guarded and educated by servants sent from the palace. If his father was on the throne at Ouagadougou when the boy reached the age of ten, he was formally installed as chief of Djiba district, the traditional seat of the Crown Prince. If his father was not on the throne, the boy remained with his mother's relatives and

643 his people. We shall see that these orders ran the gamut from demands for soldiers, tribute, and labor, to requests for sacrifices to the ancestors or to local deities for the welfare of the country.

635 The provincial governors seldom visited the districts under their control
645 more than once or twice a year. They transmitted official orders to the dis-
[203] tricts through retainers. Some ministers such as the Gounga Naba kept the
[634] sons and servants of district chiefs in the capital to be used as messengers. The district chiefs, in turn, used their sons or servants to transmit messages to their provincial governors or through them to the Mogho Naba. The use of intermediaries in the administration served another purpose: it prevented face-to-face contact, with all its potential for personal animosities, from impairing relations between those whose status depended on their political office and those whose status was derived from membership in the royal lineage.

635 Relations between the provincial ministers and the district chiefs were
645 often charged with hostility and suspicion. The district chiefs regarded the
634 provincial ministers as representatives of the Mogho Naba, and thus as
578 persons to be obeyed. Simultaneously, however, they resented this control by social inferiors. They felt that since they were the descendants of Ouedraogo and Oubri, they should receive orders only from the Mogho Naba himself. Thus, while the district chiefs accepted orders from their provincial governors, they never permitted them to forget their social status or to interfere with the internal affairs of the districts. They felt that this was the prerogative of the royal lineage. Most provincial ministers accepted these restrictions on their activities, but nevertheless saw to it that the district chiefs surrendered the goods collected for the Mogho Naba and governed their people well. Sometime in the 1920's, a provincial administrator went to a district and insulted its chief for failing to deliver the quota of millet set by the French colonial government. The accusation of laziness and embezzlement so infuriated the district chief that he asked the provincial minister whether he had taken leave of his senses and forgotten to whom he was speaking. The person who reported this incident said that if the district chief had not been restrained, he would have killed the administrator on the spot.

Both provincial administrators and district chiefs could impose indirect sanctions on each other if the bounds of propriety were overstepped in either direction. A district chief harried by his minister could not complain directly to the Mogho Naba. But he could, and often did, show his dissatisfaction by lodging with another provincial minister when he went to the capital. He would then ask the official to accompany him when he went

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

to render homage to the monarch. This attracted the attention of the Mogho Naba, who investigated the grievance of the district chief. If the provincial minister were found to be in serious error, he might be deposed and executed. The Ouidi Naba was theoretically exempt from such punishment, but it is doubtful that a strong monarch would have allowed even this official to cause trouble.

A provincial governor dissatisfied with a district chief under his charge could, under certain conditions, have him deposed and put to death. He achieved this by complaining to the monarch that the chief was either withholding tribute or misgoverning his people. In most cases, however, the minister could curb the district chief by hinting that his son would not receive a recommendation as successor to the nam of the district. This was usually enough to win the cooperation of the most recalcitrant chief, if only because his future status as the honored ancestor of a ruling local line would be jeopardized if he rebelled. These sanctions were thus sufficient to ensure satisfactory relations between the provincial ministers and their district chiefs, at least on the surface. This was to the advantage of both groups, since in the final analysis the failure of either to administer or rule well might result in the death penalty.

Many districts and villages in Ouagadougou were administered not by the provincial ministers but by officials directly responsible to the Mogho Naba. The districts in question were often ruled by close relatives of the Mogho Naba or by persons who had gained his good graces. The villages were often inhabited by slaves and governed by headmen who were themselves slaves. Like the other territories of the Mogho Naba, these districts and villages were not physically contiguous. The districts were mixed in with districts administered by the provincial ministers, and the villages stood within the territorial boundaries of district chiefs. Whenever the Mogho Naba wanted to communicate with a chief of such a village or district, he sent one of his retainers. The chiefs, in turn, used their own people to send messages and goods to Ouagadougou. The general administration of these districts and villages differed little from that of the territories administered by the provincial ministers. The main difference was that the Mogho Naba took a greater interest in their everyday affairs. This called for greater efficiency on the part of local officials; for they, like the other chiefs, faced the penalty of deposition and death for maladministration.

Of all Mossi officials, the district chiefs had the most difficult administrative task. They were in direct contact with the people, and thus ran a greater risk of being charged with misgovernment. Countless district chiefs were deposed and executed because they had allegedly disobeyed or rebelled

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

The district chief was relatively secure in the control of his territory as long as he maintained amicable relations with his immediate superiors and administered his district to their satisfaction. A less important but more constant source of concern was his relationship with neighboring chiefs. Many people who can remember the pre-conquest period say it was unsafe for a man to trespass into another district unless he was on an official mission from his chief to another chief. It appears that most of the fighting occurred over strayed cattle and stolen women, with constant raids and counter-raids. The cattle were eaten, and the women kept as wives. Captured men were sometimes sold as slaves, but more often were held for ransom. They were not kept as slaves, since the Mossi were forbidden to enslave other Mossi. Needless to say, this fighting was frowned upon by the Mogho Naba. Since all district chiefs believed in their common descent from Ouedraogo and Oubri and paid allegiance to the Mogho Naba, any fighting among them was not only a sin against the ancestors but also an act of disloyalty to the Mogho Naba. When (as was usually the case) this fighting was of short duration and few people were killed, the Mogho Naba took no official notice of it. But when it became serious, he sent the provincial administrator to stop the fighting and to summon the dissident elements to the capital for trial. The speed and severity with which the Mogho Naba dealt with quarrels within his own realm usually depended upon his strength. At some periods in Mossi history there was little internal disorder, because the rulers were strong; at other periods, under weak rulers, disorder practically amounted to internal chaos. During such periods, the Mossi were kept together only by the bonds of kinship and religion which united them against outsiders.

The district chief maintained tight control over his own territory and took an active part in its administration. In a district like Nobere, for example, the chief was aided both by an informal council and by an administrative apparatus similar to but smaller than the one at Ouagadougou. The council included men with whom the chief had grown up, members of his immediate family such as his brothers, and a few formal administrative personnel. These councillors visited him every day, brought him occasional gifts, received gifts from him in turn, and discussed informally all matters of interest. Yet, informal as this communication was, it enabled the district chief to know what was going on in his villages. Moreover, these councillors interceded for various villages and gave the chief valuable advice in administrative matters.

The formal administrative personnel of the district included a Ouidi Naba, a Baloum Naba, a Tansoba, and lesser officials with titles identical

difficulty discharging these duties, for, nobles aside, the Mossi usually obeyed orders from their chiefs—a fact verified by most observers. At the same time, a district chief had to be temperate in his demands upon his villagers, and could not take advantage of his obligations to the Mogho Naba as a means of personal enrichment. Similarly, the district administrators could not seek personal gain either by augmenting the demands of the district chief or by withholding part of the goods and services rendered to him. District administrators who were found guilty of maladministration or embezzlement were executed, because activities of this kind could—and often did—jeopardize the life of the district chief.

The Mossi might complain among themselves about the administrative policies of their district chief, but they took no measures against him unless he was very cruel or exploitative. A district chief who by his disregard for the people's welfare was believed to have lost the ability to "command people" jeopardized not only his position but also his life. When the people were dissatisfied with a chief, they either boycotted him or deserted their villages and migrated to another district, thus "increasing the force" (nam) of the chief who gave them sanctuary. This placed the deserted chief in a rather difficult position. Mogho Nanamse are known to have ordered the execution of district chiefs and even autonomous Dimdamba who had lost their subjects through their own fault. In 1863, when Mogho Naba Sanum was informed that the ruler of Boussouma, Naba Zande, had been chased away by his subjects for administrative abuses and had fled to a Ouagadougou village, he had him captured and executed.[29] Thus, the threat that people might leave the district was often strong enough to ensure a just administration, because the district chiefs and officials depended upon the villagers not only for the economic support of the central administration but also for their livelihood and their lives.

Those district chiefs who supervised other district chiefs for the Mogho Naba did not interfere with the internal administration of the districts. The chiefs of the Vooko and Nobila districts, for instance, had administrators of their own to look after their villages. But they were responsible to the chief of Nobere district, not their respective provincial ministers, for their internal affairs. Moreover, they had to follow the Nobere chief when he went to Ouagadougou to pay homage and allegiance to the Mogho Naba. But aside from these prescriptions, the chiefs of these subordinate districts administered their territories in the same manner as the Nobere chief administered his own.

The Mossi village chief had no administrators of his own to help him with day-to-day affairs of his village. However, like the district chief, he

692 or because the litigants had rejected the village chief's verdict). The chief 634 then asked the plaintiff or "the people of X village" to state their case. 695 Someone usually spoke up, and after he had finished, the chief asked the defendant or defendants to do likewise. The litigants were then asked to produce reputable witnesses to support or refute the testimony.

[641] Witnesses had to be male, adult (to have begun to "push a beard"), and [562] free. Women and bondsmen had no legal personality before a Mossi court. [567] A slave was represented at court by his master, and a woman by her husband (and, by extension, by his patrilineage). In marital quarrels or property suits, a woman was usually represented by her patrilineage. Only if [576] she alone could give the required evidence was she allowed in court. When she was asked to testify, she knelt, and spoke in a high, thin, soft voice, thus showing extreme respect to the chief and proper deference to the court. Except for these restrictions, any person could be called in as a witness. [578] Tempers often ran fairly high among the litigants' relatives and friends while they gave their testimony and argued the case, but their physical separation and their respect for the chief prevented abuse and fighting. Anyone who started a fight in court was liable to a beating by the samandekamba.

[674] The Mossi believed that most people, given sufficient reason, would commit any crime. Thus they examined the litigants carefully and at great length in an attempt to "get behind" the offense. The district chief interrogated the litigants, but the dignity of the court prevented him from arguing with them. As a matter of fact, most of the cross-examination was done by the litigants themselves. From time to time, the village administrator and the chief's confidants asked brief, direct questions. When a woman was involved, the chief's Pughtiema usually listened to the proceedings from behind a wall and questioned her. When all the evidence was in, the chief either rendered his verdict without delay or retired to the zongo to confer with his confidants and the village administrator. He took the latter course whenever he felt that further discussion was necessary or that false testimony was confusing the issue. Not until he felt that he had the facts well in hand did he return to the court to render his verdict.

The Mossi did not use ordeals in court except in the "chastity trials" conducted by the Pwe Naba. Some litigants called upon the ancestors to kill them if they were not telling the truth; others went to earth shrines and drank an infusion of dust to show that they were not afraid of the spirits who wrought vengeance on the guilty. However, such acts were never carried out in court and thus were of no use to the chief.

[669] The following case, tried in a district court in 1956, illustrates the Mossi

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

cases was over women. The Tema Dim successfully defended his principality against a Zittenga district chief who not only had the effrontery to demand the return of a wife who had fled into Tema but also invaded the principality when she failed to return.[19] The Boulsa Dim attacked and defeated the Salogho Naba when he refused to repatriate a man and woman convicted of adultery who had fled into his district. It is possible that in each case the Mogho Naba refused to become involved in a squabble over women, but it is more likely that he refrained from participating in a local war that did not threaten the security of the entire country.

Many Dimdamba made it a practice to help each other in wars against common enemies. In the middle of the nineteenth century, Naba Zende of Tema and Naba Totoabo of Yako joined in a war against Naba Sebogo of La when Sebogo refused to repatriate one of Totoabo's wives, who had fled into his territory. The two victorious allies burned villages in La and forced Sebogo to flee for his life. They searched for the woman, but she was never found. The successors of the three rulers remained embittered by this war and eventually renewed the fighting. On this occasion, Naba Tanga of Tema and Naba Sagha of Yako fought against Naba Kombase of La. But this time Yako and Tema were unable to defeat La and had to withdraw. There is no evidence that the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou took any part in these wars.[20]

The Mogho Naba appears to have taken a greater interest in wars between his Dimdamba and non-Mossi populations, and to have profited by them occasionally. When the followers of a Fulani chief named Karfo carried off some cattle belonging to the Boussouma people, the Boussouma Dim, Naba Siguiri, threatened war if the animals were not returned. Karfo not only refused to surrender the cattle but insulted Siguiri in his reply. Siguiri marched against the Fulani, killed Karfo, seized all the cattle he could find, and sent some of the "most beautiful animals" to Mogho Naba Koutou.[21]

Although the Mogho Naba tolerated wars among his Dimdamba, he apparently forbade the district chiefs under his direct command to fight among themselves. As we saw in Chapter IV, some such fighting did take place, but the Mogho Naba seems to have ignored it in most cases because of its relative unimportance. The Mossi, on the other hand, magnified this local fighting, which they called *tengkom* ("civil war"), and which consisted of mere skirmishes between villages or neighboring districts, with few casualties. In fact, the Gounga Naba once stopped a war between districts after only nineteen persons had died. But as a rule, districts seldom if ever fought among themselves. The actual combatants were villagers

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28

who fought the villagers of other districts over stray livestock, stolen goods, and runaway women, in that order of frequency.

The main reason for these inter-village wars was the lack of local mechanisms (aside from meetings of district chiefs) to deal with problems between villagers of different districts. If the district chiefs refused to meet, they could either refer the matter to the provincial level or allow the villages to resolve the problem among themselves. Many district chiefs preferred the latter course because it saved them from interference by the authorities in the capital. Besides, these problems were usually unimportant and did not pit one entire district against another. People of different districts were often bound to each other by familial and ritual ties, and did not like to fight against relatives. Only when the potential combatants were unrelated or all attempts at reconciliation failed would the people of a village (and occasionally of a district) band together, either secretly without their chiefs or under their chiefs, and go to war. In such cases, persons who had relatives in the enemy villages often remained at home.

The inhabitants of Mossi districts did band together eagerly under their chiefs to participate in slave-raiding expeditions into non-Mossi territories. This type of warfare seems to have been fairly common. Ruelle writes, "Before our [French] occupation, warfare was the chief preoccupation of the chiefs. Moreover, expeditions into Gurunsi country had as their goal pillage and the procurement of slaves for sale."[22] Similarly, Mangin states, "The Gurunsi and Busansi were frequently raided with the sole intent of obtaining slaves."[23] Binger gives the following description of a Mossi slave-catching expedition and the subsequent disposal of the slaves:

> During my second stay at Banema, Boukary [later Mogho Naba Wobogo], knowing my aversion to pillage and slavery and fearing to displease me, sent off two expeditions during the night without warning me—one to Nabouli, and the other towards the south to Baouer'a. By six o'clock in the morning of the following day, the returning horsemen were heralded by gunshots. Soon afterwards, a line of slaves of both sexes appeared, tied to each other by a cord slung around their necks. The expedition to Nabouli brought back seventeen slaves; that to Baouer'a brought only five, along with an ass laden with salt and a little cotton. As soon as these unfortunate people arrived, they were given water to drink, and mallets were used to remove the rings and copper bracelets which they wore on their arms and legs. Then they were classified into three categories:
>
> 1. The men formed a lot destined for immediate sale for fear that they should run away. They were led forthwith to Sakhaboutenga, to be exchanged against sorghum for the horses, millet for the personnel, and gunpowder.
> 2. A second lot, composed of women, was kept as a reserve to trade for horses.

CHIEFS AND POLITICIANS

chief became ridiculously smaller when distributed among the producers; gone the tolls along the roads. Henceforth, all such services will be duly and individually compensated.

Even in the most remote and least accessible villages, people speak of liberty. The old women who go to the pools for water sit down for a moment near their jars in order to talk about it. Even bush fires spread less rapidly than this news.[27]

Very few Mossi in the rural areas were qualified to vote in the first post-war elections, and those who were qualified voted for the candidates preferred by the chiefs. However, as the franchise was progressively broadened after 1951, and many more Mossi and non-Mossi politicians traveled through the rural areas, the politicians favored by the chiefs found that they had to campaign to maintain their position. Both the chiefs and their politicians resented this. One visitor to the Upper Volta reports: "A highly educated Mossi of the Upper Volta told me, 'Citizenship has unsettled and ruined the people. Everyone has become his own master, and believes himself free to do whatever he wishes.'"[28] Opposition to the chiefs and their friends came from the Moslems, who supported their co-religionists for office, and from a growing group of young Mossi who resented the power of the chiefs. In 1955 one such group in Yatenga, composed of mission-educated youths, war veterans, and former workers, broke away from the Union Voltaïque and formed the Mouvement Démocratique Voltaïque (MDV) under the joint leadership of Gérard Ouédraogo and Michel Dorange, a Frenchman, who had been a captain in the colonial army. The partisans of the MDV often came into violent conflict with the supporters of the chiefs, but the organization itself was not banned by the administration, because its members included many veterans, and because Dorange was one of its leaders.

The appearance of the anti-chief MDV was symptomatic of the problems which the Mossi chiefs were to encounter as the people became free to elect their own representatives. For one thing, the people could now censure their chiefs by voting for their opponents, who appealed to them in terms of release from traditional prestations. But more important, even those Mossi politicians who were still friendly to the chiefs and depended on their support for election were becoming increasingly autonomous. The chiefs were operating in one power structure, the politicians in another and more important one. In Dakar, in Paris, and in the Palace of Versailles (where the Assembly of the French Union met) Mossi politicians dealt not only with local African problems but with problems the chiefs knew nothing about. As the politicians grew skillful at the game of metropolitan

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28
[post World War II Period]

created out of the defunct Entente Voltaïque. In an attempt to gain the support of these parties and of the young Mossi intellectuals who, while anti-chief, were not yet willing to join the PDV, Conombo officially scrapped the Union Voltaïque in 1955 and formed the Parti Social d'Education des Masses Africaines (PSEMA).[30] The party pledged to promote social reform and the right of Africans to manage their own affairs, and to struggle against family, regional, and racial hatreds. But it did not win the support of the non-Mossi; nor did it attract many young Mossi, who did not believe that it had discarded the mantle of the chiefs. Conombo's readiness to ally himself with anti-chief forces, however, did make it obvious to the chiefs that when politicians were out to gain power, they did not always take the interests of the chiefs into account.

In 1956, when a *loi-cadre* granting almost complete autonomy to the French African territories was approved by the National Assembly, it made no provision for the participation of the traditional chiefs in the projected governmental structure.[31] In fact, as preparations were being made to implement the new reforms, a number of politicians and educated Africans launched an attack on the chiefs which seems to have been a step toward edging them out of power altogether. The newspaper *Afrique Nouvelle*, published in Dakar but read by the educated elite throughout French West Africa, carried a series of articles that proclaimed: "The district chiefs should be given neither a position nor a salary!" "Let us democratize the chieftainship!" and "Let us decapitate the district!" (i.e., let us do away with the district chief). Over a photo showing the traditional chiefs, *Afrique Nouvelle* ran the caption, "Are they still chiefs of the territories?"[32]

The Mossi chiefs, who had retained more power and prestige than any other chiefs in French West Africa, bore the brunt of these attacks and rose to defend the rights of all the chiefs. Their most able spokesman was Bouda, a Councillor of the French Union and a district chief in his own right. He wrote in *Afrique Nouvelle*:

> The Mossi [socio-political] organization, by its simplicity and cohesiveness, aroused the admiration of France, which respected and retained it.
>
> The power of the Mossi chief may be great, but it is not used to oppose the progress which is being made. The Mossi chief is not as much of a conformist as people have a tendency to believe. The social and political revolution which, since 1946, has made Mossi country so different from what it was before the war, is effecting the transition from a society largely encompassed by Nabas possessing real authority, an authority sanctioned by custom, to a more progressive way of life whose essential characteristics are underlined by the growth of towns, the uprooting of a large part of the population, and the triumph of the desire to be on one's own. . . .

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28
[post World War II Period]

175*
642
631
578

The Mossi chiefs indeed understand today that a tradition, no matter how respected, is not immutable. It is susceptible to change and evolution; it will evolve.

In all truth, and with due deference to those who systematically denigrate everything connected with them, the chiefs have borne positive witness to the characteristic spirit of this country, and it is as unfair as it is stupid to deny the important role they have played in certain cases in the cause of tranquility and peace.

As the natural spokesmen for their people, they have been, in many instances, the first to pay a heavy price for the common cause. Without them, demagoguery would have plunged the country into irreparable decadence.

. . .

The demands of the traditional chiefs are justified and deserve to be heeded, because, in the face of the inertia of the Government and the rapid development of events, it is to be feared that the chiefs, although disposed by nature to be patient and to wait quietly, might run rather than walk in the days to come.[33]

175*
642
631
665

In December 1956, the Mossi chiefs, supported by the other traditional chiefs in French West Africa, convoked a Congress of Chiefs at Dakar. This Congress approved a constitution for an organization called the Federal Union of the Syndicates of the Traditional Chiefs, and adopted a proposal on the need for a statute governing the status and material well-being of the chiefs. The Congress did underline the apolitical character of the chieftainship, but asked that the chiefs be given some recognition in the new structures being created by the loi-cadre.

On the local level, the Mossi chiefs convoked a Syndicate of the Traditional Chiefs of the Upper Volta at Tenkodogo a month later. Its president, Etienne Congo, brother of Mogho Naba Sagha II of Ouagadougou, declared:

> At this time, when vast changes are under way, it would be inconceivable for us, the traditional chiefs, not to take an active part in the new developments, of whose urgent and precarious nature we are fully aware.
>
> Our position is clear: we are not opposed in any way to this evolution.
>
> As for statutory matters, I wish to express our concern over the fact that at the very moment when the loi-cadre is turning an important page in the history of Africa, our group has been left out.[34]

668
175*
631
642
665
[648]*

The Mossi chiefs had indeed been abandoned by the French administration. Although they continued to receive the support of some politicians, it soon became clear that the latter were mainly interested in maneuvering for power under the loi-cadre and in uniting their parties to this end. Conombo, the leader of the PSEMA, was induced by his supporters and by a

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28
[Post World War II Period]

For all its occasional eloquence, the new Mogho Naba's speech was clearly self-serving; moreover, the French officials to whom it was addressed were withdrawing from the territory, and the young Mossi elite had other ideas about the distribution of power. It is no wonder, then, that most of the politicians listened to his speech in respectful silence and then "calmly went ahead with their tasks," confident, it seems, in their new status as the elected representatives of the people."[40]

The new Mogho Naba was faced with a political situation in which he could play only a limited role. His strength now lay exclusively among the more conservative elements of the newly enfranchised rural masses. The political representative of this group was Conombo, who in November 1957 went ahead with his plans to rebuild the PSEMA. In December Conombo saw a chance to embarrass and perhaps defeat the Coulibaly Government when the Territorial Assembly decided to vote on the budget of the Upper Volta; he and his followers withheld their vote of confidence in the Government and tried to force it to resign. But the conditions under which the members of the Territorial Assembly could force a government to resign were not clearly defined by the loi-cadre. The various parliamentary groups appealed in vain to Paris and to Houphouët-Boigny to resolve the problem. Coulibaly broke the impasse by forming a new coalition and giving Maurice Yaméogo, an Indépendant candidate who had been a member of the RDA and later of the MDV but had switched back to the RDA, the important portfolio of Minister of the Interior. Finally, the Assembly, which had been adjourned, reconvened in April 1958 and confirmed Coulibaly in power. In a speech to the Assembly, Coulibaly declared: "It is my imperative task to tell you that each one of you is faced today with a decisive choice. You must choose either a pooling of efforts and good will in the interests of the country, or the pursuit of personal quarrels and partisan rivalries that will undermine the public welfare."[41]

The Mogho Naba and his political allies suffered yet another defeat with the Assembly's approval of the Coulibaly Government. However, Kougri had other strings to his bow. In June 1958, when de Gaulle returned to power, Kougri sought to gain the General's favor, and to raise his own status, by pledging his support and that of the Mossi chiefs. This astute political move infuriated many Voltaics, Mossi and non-Mossi, politicians and non-politicians. Amadou Tamboura, a member of the MDV, replied to the Mogho Naba in the newspaper *Paris-Dakar*. Under the headline, "The Message of the Mogho Naba to General de Gaulle Commits Only Himself," he wrote:

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28
[Post World War I Period]

It will be well if the Mogho Naba understands that he owns but the vestige of a past whose hour has irrevocably tolled, and that his message to the President of the Council [de Gaulle] commits no one in the Upper Volta but himself, a mere citizen like the others.

I deplore the discrimination which the message of the Mogho Naba implicitly contains. I should like to say to the Mogho Naba that in the Upper Volta there are no Mossi, Fulani, or Bobo people, but only Black people struggling for their liberty. No Mossi or any other Voltaic would agree to the Mogho Naba's expression of fidelity to France in his name. If this must be done, then the Territorial Assembly and the Government Council alone are qualified to do so.[42]

Despite these attacks and numerous suggestions in the press that the Mogho Naba and the Mossi chiefs were developing a "Touré complex" (i.e., the fear of suffering the same fate as the Fulani chiefs of Fouta Djallon, who had been deposed by Sékou Touré, Vice-President of the Guinea Government Council), the Mossi ruler actively supported acceptance of the constitution of the Fifth French Republic, which promised the colonies full internal self-government within the "French Community." Since the constitution was adopted by the Upper Volta population by an overwhelming favorable vote of 99.1 per cent, no one could estimate how effective the Mogho Naba's support had been.[43]

Coulibaly died just before the referendum, and was replaced on an interim basis by Yaméogo. The parliamentarians accordingly had to choose a new leader, now to be President of the Government Council, as well as to draw up a constitution for the new republic and determine whether it would join any of the regional federations then being considered by several territories. The Territorial Assembly was scheduled to meet in extraordinary session on October 17, 1958, to select a successor to Coulibaly. The Mogho Naba, anticipating dissension and perhaps once again seeking the limelight, sent a message to the representatives on October 15, urging "a government of union and public safety." But the politicians resented what they regarded as his interference in matters that did not concern him; few, if any, took his message seriously, and none replied.

The Mogho Naba therefore decided to force the issue. He summoned his traditional ministers to a conference, and, despite the objections of the Baloum Naba, obtained their permission to order his Tansoba to muster his warriors and lay siege to the Territorial Assembly. Early in the morning of October 17, about 3,000 Mossi warriors, armed with bows and arrows, swords, spears, and ancient flint guns, converged on the Assembly. Later that morning, the Mogho Naba himself, accompanied by his Tansoba,

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28
[Post World War II Period]

arrived on the scene, dressed in his dark-brown cotton war cloak and his war bonnet, the symbol of his power. The demonstration lasted until 11 A.M., when the French Army undertook to scatter the warriors. Finally, the Ouidi Naba ordered the warriors to return to the palace. Only then did Max Berthet, the High Commissioner, open the Assembly session with an expression of regret for the "unacceptable and incomprehensible" demonstrations.[44]

The Assembly adjourned that afternoon and did not meet again until October 20. In the interim, the parliamentarians took measures to deal with this challenge to their power. On October 18, the Government Council issued a communiqué "stigmatizing Friday's demonstration." The Council regretted that the demonstration had prevented a democratically elected body from sitting, but affirmed that "order and public security, indispensable to everyday life, will be maintained."[45] On the following day a longer communiqué was issued, declaring that a truce had been signed by the authorized representatives of the Union Démocratique (Voltaic section of the RDA) and the Mouvement de Regroupement Africain (Voltaic section of the PRA) after a three-day meeting in Ouagadougou. According to the communiqué, the two groups had agreed that "the unity of the democratic forces of the country" was "the decisive question of the hour."

The Territorial Assembly met in Plenary Session on October 20, and on the basis of the political truce, 68 representatives unanimously elected Maurice Yaméogo as President of the Government Council. The politicians further showed their disdain for the Mogho Naba by adopting the following motion:

> The Territorial Assembly, in the unanimous assurance that it alone has the mandate of the Voltaic people to legislate in their name, solemnly declares that, in the face of all opposition, it will work to give the Voltaic State democratic institutions conforming to the aspirations of the population, within the framework of the constitution which they approved by such a strong majority on September 28. Furthermore, it is insistent in its demands that the authorities responsible for public order do everything in their power to determine the persons responsible for the demonstration and to see what should be done to avoid a recurrence of such an event.[46]

The Mogho Naba soon found to his chagrin that even some of his own vassal chiefs had turned against him. They had been persuaded by the politicians that the French Government would never allow the Mogho Naba to take over the country, and furthermore that he had overstepped his bounds and had thereby endangered further the institution of the chieftainship. The Bureau of the Syndicate of the Traditional Chiefs of

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
FA28 Mossi FA28
[Post World War II Period]

the Upper Volta met, discussed "the affair of October 17," and issued a statement dissociating itself from the Mogho Naba's action, reaffirming its desire to collaborate with the established authority, and requesting a clarification of the status of chiefs in the new order. The Government Council of the Upper Volta welcomed this statement, and hastened to reassure the chiefs that their status was not in danger: "It is not a question of damaging the traditional chiefs as a group, but rather of stigmatizing vigorously an act emanating from a superior chief like Mogho Naba Kougri, the consequences of which, unforeseen as they were, could have placed all the Mossi chiefs in a regrettable and irreparable position."[47]

The Mogho Naba had obviously reached a political impasse, and he next turned his attention to creating a new image of the chieftainship. To this end, he married a young Mossi woman in accordance with the civil statutes of the state, thus becoming the first Mogho Naba and the first important Mossi chief to do so. A spokesman at the wedding placed this act in its proper perspective with the following words:

> I should now like to underscore the fact that this date, November 22 [1958], will be inscribed officially in the annals of the Upper Volta. For the first time in the history of our country, an Emperor, the person who best symbolizes tradition, has upset ancestral habits in the interest of progress. For the first time a woman will be given consideration in a royal court where she will be able to feel at her ease. For the first time, the spouse of a traditional chief will have her place near her husband as an equal and steady companion.[48]

The politicians were apparently prepared to recognize the eminence of the chiefs as long as they did not attempt to intervene in the affairs of the state, and a number of them attended the Mogho Naba's wedding. Among those present were the Presidents of both the Government Council and the Territorial Assembly, parliamentarians from various parties, and the mayors of Bobo-Dioulasso and Ouagadougou. On December 10, 1958, the Territorial Assembly confirmed Yaméogo as President of the Government Council. The Assembly also approved his slate of ministers, among them Bouda, the Mossi chief who had once been a strong supporter of the traditional political hierarchy but who now belonged to the UDV-RDA. Then, on December 11, the Assembly decided to adopt the draft of a proposed constitution for the Upper Volta. Articles 2 and 3 of Paragraph I of this constitution state explicitly:

> The Republic of the Upper Volta is one and indivisible, secular, democratic, and social. Its principle is that the government is *of the people, by the people, and for the people. . . .*
>
> *Sovereignty belongs to the people. No section of the population, and no individual, may usurp it.* [Italics mine.][49]

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

to be sold the article at a lower price. The result is that the pace of commerce in a Mossi market is somewhat relaxed, but the lack of intense competition prevents a great deal of hositility and quarreling among the market people.

The amount of small trading which takes place in a Mossi market is fantastic, so much so that one gains the impression that some people trade simply for the sake of trading. Everyone tries to get money so that he or she can buy some desired object, but it is impossible for one to obtain a clear idea of what kind of profit, if any, people make from their commerce. In fact, the idea of a profit does not seem to be important when people are selling their own products. Most people only think about profit when they buy things to resell—whether these things are of African or European manufacture. This, incidentally, is one of the reasons why the prices of foodstuffs are about 10 per cent lower in the country districts than at Wagadougou, and concommitently, why imported products are 10 to 20 per cent higher in the rural districts than at Wagadougou where they are bought. When a woman takes such products as cotton, beans or millet to market, she may gross about 100 francs in the course of the day. But out of this she may give a few francs to her husband to buy kola nuts, a few francs to her daughter to buy a plastic necklace, and spend the rest for a cotton skirt, a piece of meat and condiments for her sauces. Men whose wives do not bring many goods to market must usually give them about 100 francs to spend on the various products the family needs. There are no official restrictions on the kinds of goods which may or may not be sold in the Mossi markets. In pre-European times slaves and eunuchs were the common stock-in-trade of the major markets and of some of the smaller ones as well. The only active supervision that existed and still exists concerns the butchering of meat: Every person who sells meat in the market must exhibit the skin of the butchered animal in a public place so that there will be no question as to the ownership of the animal. If the meat in question is the remains of a cow killed and half-eaten by a lion, then the village or district chief must be notified before the meat enters the market. The person in charge of this task used to be, and often still is, a man called the Kos Naba, a kind of sales chief. He also formerly doubled as a tax collector for the rulers and chiefs. Another official, the Raga Naba, where he still exists, is more concerned with protecting the lives and property of the people who trade at the markets, but he also supervises the sale of some commodities there and formerly also collected taxes for his superior.

In pre-European times, every important Mossi prince and district chief had the counterpart of a Kos Naba and Raga Naba, to collect taxes in their markets.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

shoulder; but when he arrives in the market, he calmly places his weapon on top of one of the sheds before he makes his rounds. The women do not carry any weapons to market except their "words" but even these are not often used because of the desire to avoid hostility—which the Mossi do not like to have disrupt one of their major institutions.

The rural market is the center of Mossi social life, and friends as well as enemies meet within its confines. What Mangin wrote some forty years ago is still true: "Every self-respecting Mossi—man or woman, child or elder—must go to market at least once in a while, were it only to look . . . and to be looked at, if he can put on some handsome clothes" (Mangin 1921 : 53). Except for the Moslems who are now experimenting with a form of Purdah, there are few persons who do not go to market. The absence of someone from the market for more than two consecutive occasions is a sure sign of illness, travel, or family crisis. As one man said to me, "I must go to market, and when I get there I look for three persons: my girl friend, my debtor and my enemy. If I do now know whether any of them are at the market I am ill at ease. And when I go to the market and do not see them all, the market is not good."

The lively character of the Mossi market will be discussed later, but throughout this kaleidoscope of activities certain consistencies can be discerned. For example, one notices many different kinds of greetings and salutations in the market place, but each one of them correctly indicates the exact relation or relationship between the persons involved. Young girls on passing each other on one of their innumerable circuits of the market bend their knees slightly and place both of their cupped hands on their own breasts. Only then will they stop and exchange news. At the end of the conversation they repeat the same greeting and continue their rounds. Both girls and women greet casual male acquaintances in the same way, but invariably kneel if the male stops and talks to them. Women sometime kneel when speaking to each other, but always do so when addressing any male relative of a respected category, who may then send them on errands such as buying tobacco from the vendors. A man who meets a female benefactor, such as a woman who has given medicine to one of his children, invariably kneels down before her. She may do the same thing out of respect for his male status. However, when a man meets either his mother-in-law or his father's sister, he is the one to kneel down in order to greet her. Two men who are equals normally shake hands, but if not, the junior in status or in age kneels down before his elder or superior. Sometimes a high status man will prevent his greeter from kneeling by raising him. When

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

greeting a lower status benefactor, a man will get down and greet him from a kneeling position. It is because of this elaborate system of greeting, with the many opportunities thus provided for one person to slight another, that many important persons never go to the market. As a rule, the failure of any one person to give the required greeting to another when they meet in the market place is always an indication of strained relations between them.

The persons from whom an individual may buy goods, and the kinds of goods which may be purchased by one individual from another, are governed by convention and social relationships. A person may not buy anything from a relative except European goods. A man cannot buy any but cooked food in the market place, and often he asks a female relative or a passing female to buy it for him. To do the contrary is held to be unmanly and indicative of a bad character. A woman will not buy cotton cloth but will send a man to buy it for her. She would hate to have people believe that she has no male relative to weave it for her, or what is more likely, that she is too lazy to spin the cotton thread which would then be woven for her. A woman may purchase any type of commodity from other women, but she must be careful not to patronize men who are known to be libertines or with whom she is suspected of having an affair. She must also be careful about running errands for men, since people know that men often use this device to establish amorous relationships with women. Men also use this device to give presents, or to arrange secret meetings with them. If any man sees a female relative involved in any of these misadventures, he chases her away and more than likely curses the man, if he does not fight him. In any event, he warns the man to leave the woman alone.

The market is one of the few places where men and women can initiate relationships not sanctioned by their relatives. Under normal conditions marriages are arranged between unrelated individuals through the lineage members who establish "friendly" relationships. Two friends might ask their lineage heads for women to exchange as wives or the "friend" who has received more gifts from the other will give over a wife. Because the older men most often have goods and women at their disposal, they are usually the ones who receive wives. The result is that most young men have no wives, and until they inherit wives from lineage members, are continually seeking to establish intimate relations with women whom they meet on the market place. The technique which a young man employes to gain the favors of a woman he sees at market is highly stereotyped. First of all, he must ascertain that the woman in question is not a member of his maximal lineage or married to a member of his own lineage. A responsible

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

837 man even refrains from making overtures to a woman whose husband's female relatives may be married to a member of his own [689] [613] lineage. He fears that a wronged husband may have the wives of his lineage brothers recalled, thus causing dissension within and between the two lineages. If none of these complications are present, a man seeks out a person who knows the woman and sends a message de- [431] [801] claring his intentions. If the response is favorable, the man then buys four large kola nuts (four being the number for a woman), wraps them together with 44 francs, and send them to his lady. This procedure may be followed on subsequent market days without the two parties ever coming into direct contact with each other. Finally, however, a rendezvous is arranged, and on the pretense of leaving the market to visit a relative for several days, the woman goes instead to her lover's village.

837 These casual affairs started at the market sometimes become quite 586 serious, and if for any reason they are sanctioned by the relatives of either the man or the woman, they often lead to the breakup of a [443] marriage. And since the market is the place where disputants of any [576] sort most likely come into contact, it is here that fights over "stolen" wives break out.

837 This pattern of extramarial relationships centering around the 443 market place is so common among the Mossi that the younger men, and even some of the older ones, are disappointed with the "market" when their mistresses do not appear. Mossi men who sit under the shelters around the market place can usually give an inquirer not only the name of a woman, the name and village of her husband and father, but also the name and village of her paramour. Characteristically enough, they are always "ignorant" of the escapades of their own 593 female relatives or of the wives of their lineage members. The only 443 time when men act as though their relatives might be involved in extramarital affairs is when for some purpose or another a man has to recall a wife or daughter who has gone to visit a relative in another village or district. Regardless of how pressing the problem may be, a man will seldom go directly to his father-in-law's house to recall the woman. He goes to the market nearest to his in-laws' village, and seeks his wife there. If he does not find her or any of her relatives, he goes to the part of the market in which people from her village sell their products and sends a message to her family that he will come for her the next day, or that he would like her to come home.

443 A market place is also one of the best places to look for news of a 203 runaway wife, or of any stranger in an area. The Mossi say that women have footprints like an elephant in that they can be found quite easily, but that the footprints are always clearest in the market.

12:Skinner E-4,5 (1955-1957) 1962
FA28 Mossi FA28

market and set up their small tables to display all types of goods from trinkets to single lumps of sugar. And the more numerous young men, who have no goods but have money in their pockets, go to the leaf-covered sheds, place their weapons on top of them, and take seats from which to view the passing parade. Imperceptibly, the hum in the market increases as people find their places and greet one another with *Ne Raga,* the market greeting, until by 11:30 A.M. the whole market reverberates with sounds of drumming, cries of vendors, and the shrill voice of water hawkers and juvenile vendors. Now the market is in full swing.

From midday until about 3:30 P.M., the Mossi market is a sea of humanity—talking, laughing, arranging rendezvous, quarreling, selling, buying, parading, and (where youngsters are concerned) often crying for want of money to buy a desired object. The return of migrants lends additional color and excitement to the market as these young people walk about in their new clothes, encouraging the drummers to sing louder praises, the maidens to feel jealous of the clothes of the migrants' female relatives, the former migrants to reminisce about the days when they too had bright new clothes, and the young boys to dream of going off one day to obtain the things they need.

Men, noting that their female relatives are spending too much time looking over the wares of a vendor of European products or of the kola-nut seller, wander over ostensibly to help in the purchase but really to prevent love affairs. The failure to observe such a precaution may be the cause of the shouting a man hears in the distance, and off he hurries to see whether a lineage brother or a friend may need his aid. He may either get into the battle himself, or aid the Raga Naba and the other elders to chase the battlers out of the market place, or to take them to the chief. This may indeed restore some peace and good fellowship to the market.

Elders, now more interested in beer than in other pleasures, pass the heat of the market day under the beer sellers' shed. From time to time one of them may be interrupted by a young man bringing him three kola nuts, one or two of which are immediately broken and given to friends. However, when an oldster, whether a drinking pagan or a Moslem teetotaler, sees or overhears a young man buying four kolas, he may frown or smile in the knowledge that mischief is afoot. Loud-voiced predictions of the consequences of evil-doing may suddenly disturb the merrymakers as American missionaries speaking in perfect More (the language of the Mossi) appear and harangue the market people. Then, as suddenly, the *Americadamba* depart in their large cars, and the curious pagans, amused Catholics or hostile Moslems who had gathered to hear the gospel return to